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PRESIDING JUDGE ERIC C. TAYLOR DETAILS CURRENT ELEMENTS OF N.O.W. PLAN TO INCREASE TIMELY ACCESS TO JUSTICE AND REDUCE CRIMINAL PANDEMIC-RELATED BACKLOGS

Reduced Reliance on Emergency Orders Supports Restoration of Pre-Pandemic Efficiency

The Court is increasing the number of jury trials and preliminary hearings and taking other steps as part of the Normalization of Operations Work (N.O.W.) plan to systematically address pandemic-related Criminal case delays and safely restore Criminal operations to pre-pandemic levels of efficiency, Presiding Judge Eric C. Taylor announced today.

"N.O.W. builds on the Court's measured and deliberate approach to safely restore court operations by reducing Criminal case backlogs and increasing timely and equal access to justice for Criminal litigants," Presiding Judge Taylor said. "Together with our justice partners, we are using this plan to get back to normalcy while carefully monitoring COVID case trends in Los Angeles County."

The overarching N.O.W. plan currently includes these elements:

- Reduced reliance on emergency orders to extend statutory deadlines for Criminal cases. For more than a month, the Court has been safely ramping up trials and preliminary

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N.O.W. Plan 2-2-2-2

hearings with longstanding public health measures in place to restore safe access to justice for Criminal litigants.

- Continuing review of the Emergency Bail Schedule related to the COVID emergency.
- Modified jail operations to allow vaccinated and unvaccinated in-custody defendants appropriate housing aimed at preventing COVID quarantine disruptions in cases during trials.
- Thanks to the Chief Justice and the Judicial Council, use of the recently awarded \$9.2 million in Early Disposition Program funding for additional bench officers and staff to assist with Criminal case resolutions.

“N.O.W. signifies a shift in the Court’s pandemic recovery,” Presiding Judge Taylor said. “After nearly two years, COVID case trends are moving in the right direction in Los Angeles County. In early October, the Court moved away from reliance on emergency orders and continuances to manage our Criminal caseload. As part of this new approach, the N.O.W. plan will enable the Court to identify and address stress points in pandemic-era Criminal case processing and shift to solutions that will expedite and expand our efforts to safely return to pre-pandemic norms.”

While the Court implements this plan, Presiding Judge Taylor – who regularly communicates with LA County Department of Public Health officials – emphasized that the N.O.W plan will continue to prioritize public health and safety, including continued monitoring of any change in COVID winter case trends. Presiding Judge Taylor, who earlier this year sought prioritized vaccinations for court staff, Criminal justice attorneys and staff, and judicial officers, emphasized that the Court’s COVID-19 protocols, including mandatory use of face masks in all courthouses, smaller batches of jury panels, plexiglass dividers, frequent cleaning of high-touch surfaces, and availability of hand sanitizer, will remain in place to reduce the spread of the novel coronavirus.

As discussions continue with the Court’s justice partners, the Court will provide more details in future news releases. For updates, follow the Court on Twitter ([@LASuperiorCourt](https://twitter.com/LASuperiorCourt)) and visit the Court’s website (LACourt.org).

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